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ABSTRACT

A look at the availability and use of broadcast courses for college credit is presented, with emphasis on the program at Coastline Community College, Costa Mesa, California. High enrollment of students in its courses is attributed to promotion efforts and to the careful design of courses as complete learning systems with a whole set of components. Plans presented call for future course production at the level of two courses per year and a design strategy incorporating several expert efforts along with nationwide distribution. Plans for personnel to facilitate course work are mentioned. (HAB)

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ACCESS TO BROADCAST COURSES FOR CREDIT

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We all know about the experiences with the "Ascent of Man" and with "Classic Theater" which broadcast in the fall of 1975 with three hundred colleges participating nationwide. We enjoyed a similar experience with the "Adams Chronicles" where more than three hundred colleges nationwide participated in the offering. We are aware of the upcoming Galbraith series which will air in the fall of '77 as a nationwide broadcast series.

In addition to the nationwide use of broadcast courses, there is the syndication or occasional use of broadcast courses at an accelerating rate in areas throughout the country.

Over the last four years, we at Coast have produced eight courses. We began offering broadcast courses for credit locally in 1973. Our opening enrollment was about six hundred, but by last fall all students participation had topped the six thousand mark. I think this speaks for itself. The interest is great. In addition, there are about 140 colleges around the country using the courses we helped develop, and the number is increasing. It should be noted that we did not put a major effort behind assisting others to use those courses. We did what we could with a small staff to get the courses going. All of these factors point to a new future for Coast and broadcast courses.

Just for the record, we look at broadcast courses not simply as television courses. We look at them as complete learning systems with

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a whole set of components, with very careful design, and with the video portion (while it is highly visible) being only one factor in the courses. We have found that the test battery, the construction of the text materials, the interactive syllabus, the use of telephone to review setups, other kinds of weekly quizzes and all kinds of extravisual activities are absolutely crucial, not only to the success of the students, but in sustaining participation and giving a feeling of successful completion at the end of the course. Our experience is that those institutions who have not gone to a lot of extra visual effort have wound up in trouble and without students. It is a complex problem which requires a very definite approach to administration.

We are very excited. We are so excited we have built Coastline Community College whose main pillar is going to be broadcast courses for credit.

I would hope we could develop at least two broadcast courses each year which would be offered nationwide. I do not know what our absorption capacity is nor what all the complexities are. But it is not too difficult for us to coordinate with CPB, PBS, with the stations, and with the colleges on two courses and that we can expand to fulfill our future growth potential. We would like to get broadcast course production into a more orderly process wherein we know what was coming so we can do the preplanning necessary to get all of these courses together and the information out in time.

We would like to see thirty or forty high quality broadcast courses around the nation which could be used by colleges and stations in a fairly regular way to build broadcast sequences. These, however, do not

exist. Arthur Little did a report that was published in the Chronicle of Education about three years ago which indicated there were three at that time. We have grown beyond that now, there may be as many as fifteen, but there is still a great vacuum to be filled.

There are a number of core courses available, but you cannot sustain a viable program on only those. Limited numbers of courses do not do the students a service either. We might as well face the reality of the times and the state of technology and the understanding of psychology. We must understand that both visual and print media create a portable knowledge gathering situation that people find convenient.

The nature of the learner has changed. In the 1950's the average college student was 18 to 22 years of age. In the 60's we were all reporting statistics that the ages were between 20 and 30. We were stunned by the fact. And now, anywhere you look, the average age of the student participating in college courses of any type is between 30 and 40. These are different times. They are different people. The number of part-time college people attending classes is increasing and the whole setting is changing.

I hope that as time passes the TV stations, the schools, and the colleges will participate together in the orderly process of offering broadcast courses for credit. There is, however, a myth that stifles this change. I think there is a reaction from faculties who are fearful that they will be gobbled up by this emerging Goliath. That they will all be put out of work. This is certainly one of the great myths of our time. Only a fool would be committed to a monosystematic approach using only one medium. Assuming a station dedicates 60% of its broadcast time to broadcast courses for credit and is committed to

repeating each course at least twice, there is no way a station situated in a cluster of colleges can offer more than seven or eight courses in any given semester over the air without saturating its capacity. So what we are talking about is the orderly offering by any college in cooperation with a television station of probably three to eight broadcast courses in any given semester. That is the setting.

There is a not-so-secret secret that I think accrues to enrollment. We have seven colleges in our county of Orange, and our enrollment at Coastline is 6,000 while the next college has an enrollment of about 800. People ask "Why don't you divulge your secret?" Okay--here it is: It is promotion. There is a direct relationship between enrollment and communications with people. People want to participate, they do participate if there is a convenient way for them to find out how to do it. They will not stay aboard unless the activities are structured to get them from the beginning to the end. But promotion is the secret.

We have spent two years on a task force with the University of California at San Diego developing principles around which we are going to develop broadcast courses for credit. There was always the question of faculty royalties and all that kind of thing. Everything that we do, we do on contract for services. All the courses we prepare are prepared by course teams. There is a complex of individual talent that is brought to bear on every course. Every team has a chairman, an instructional design person, a producer, and whatever number of faculty members are appropriate. We break them into module teams and publications persons so that no one person is responsible for the emergence of any single broadcast course. Contractual arrangements are the only way to get into the complexities of a broadcast course without getting trapped

into a situation which will eventually block the offering of courses and create an uncomfortable situation in the future. We came to that, we had to grow into that from some experiences we had earlier. So all of our people are paid as you go. And we, whoever the investors or the interested parties are, own all the rights so that we can move to distribution of the courses in some viable way.

The population that we serve at Coastline is more than half-a-million. In terms of promotion, each semester we send out more than 300,000 enrollment brochures featuring course information. I wanted to mention this because I know some other people do the same thing. That is part of the reason for the difference.

We have now centralized the operational aspect of the broadcast courses. Previously, we were decentralized in terms of administration.

We facilitate courses with a number of facilitators. In each course a faculty member is assigned as a facilitator. Facilitators operate pretty much on their own; they answer phones, hold office hours and provide assistance. They operated more independently in the past, however, than they will now as we centralize and coordinate.

We established Coastline Community College as a college without a campus. We had the accreditation visit in June. We are up before the Western Association for final approval soon. We will be open for the fall in September with a projected enrollment of about 25,000 students. We have already arranged for about 115 location sites around the community. We expect about six to seven thousand students in broadcast courses. We are in all kinds of other flexible arrangements. We did facilitate the broadcast courses for credit. That was the primary function of the dean of instruction at Coastline. We are

setting up a fairly high echelon position for a person we are going to call an expeditor. The expeditor is going to do everything associated with that broadcast course under the guidance of the policy set up by the dean. What we found out was that things kept getting away from us. We found survey on top of survey. We found questionnaire on top of questionnaire. We found missing information. We could not get the data together. We found illiterate facilitator letters to students. We found all kinds of things, so I have decided to create a position that is a combination of administrative type person--an executive secretary. The sharpest person in that category that we can find. We are going to centralize all of the process activities around that person. We have fourteen facilitators lined up to handle courses for us in the fall. We will let the expeditor work with those facilitators under the dean of instruction to offer those courses. We are now setting up a staff development workshop before school opens so that we can get everyone on an even plane and so that everyone will know how he or she will operate together. It took us three years to develop to that point. It is going to help to sort out our problems.

We are suffering the experiences of local success which is awe-striking and exciting. We produces a course last fall called "Home Gardener" that became the darling of the community. More than 2,000 students enrolled. Countless more viewed the 30-part series. We are an urban area. People have a lot of other interests and home gardening was a real block-buster. So with what is developing at our place and what is developing around the country and around the world, it looks to me as though the dimension of broadcast courses is going to be an important component of the new construction of education as we approach America's third century.